

STORY 37.

A MUSLIM'S WORD.

IN their conquering career nobody could withstand the Muslims. Taking city after city they at last laid siege to Damascus the most important city of Syria.

(Hazrat) Khalid commanded the armies of Islam and (Hazrat) Abu Obeida was the next in command.

The Romans thinking that (Hazrat) Khalid was a stern soldier approached (Hazrat) Abu Obeida, and promised to surrender the city if they were given the assurance that people would be safe. (Hazrat) Abu Obeida who was always inclined more to peace than to war gave the required assurance. This he did without consulting (Hazrat) Khalid.

Accordingly one of the gates of the city was opened and (Hazrat) Abu Obeida entered with a part of the Arab army. (Hazrat) Khalid who was on the opposite side of the city was not aware of what had happened and he was thinking of taking the city by storm. Some of his men entered through a drain and opened one of the gates, and (Hazrat) Khalid and his army entered and according to the usages of war in those days began to kill every body who blocked their way.

At last the two generals met. (Hazrat) Abu Obeida told (Hazrat) Khalid how he had promised

to spare the people. But (Hazrat) Khalid said he had no right to make the promise which consequently was not binding on him who as commander-in-chief was the sole authority. (Hazrat) Abu Obeida protested that although he was (Hazrat) Khalid's subordinate still he was a Muslim and as such his given word must be respected.

The two generals could not agree, but allowed the people to live in peace, and decided to refer the question to the Caliph at Medina. After a few days the answer came. The Caliph agreed with (Hazrat) Abu Obeida and (Hazrat) Khalid bowed before his decision.

The phase of Muslim character that they never broke their word was very helpful in the spread of Islam. Suspicion gave place to trust, and trust led to knowledge which led to wholesale conversions.